

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH El Mes de la Herencia Hispana September 15 – October 15

The Civil Rights Division is recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month throughout the month of October.



### Employee Spotlight Phenelophe Michel-Garrido



Headquarters Finance Division, ASA 2

She loves to do yoga; it allows her to meditate and to stay focused while doing exercises. She also enjoys hiking and road trips. Once a year, the family takes road trips and visit different states.

Joined TDOT December 2018

#### Tell us about a moment in Hispanic History that influenced or shaped your career/life?

Though I don't have a specific moment in Hispanic history, but the moment that continues to shape my career and life is the story of Teresa Carreño. When I was just 13 years old, my father took me to the theater Teresa Carreño. I was delighted to be there, while we were walking through the theater, I asked him what Teresa Carreño had done in her life to have a theater named after her, he told me: Her love for music, dedication, perseverance and discipline led her to be a famous pianist in the 19th century. Her music was so beautiful that she performed for Abraham Lincoln and later for Woodrow Wilson. It was the first time I heard these 3 words together: dedication, perseverance and discipline.

#### Who within or outside TDOT has been influential in your career? Are they a mentor today?

Jorge Perez-Eman, a great mentor of mine, reminded me again of what my father had taught me so young, half-done, rushed jobs go wrong—it's better not to do it. On the other hand, a job well done says a lot about you. It says that you must have had dedication, perseverance, discipline and, above all, love for what you did.

#### Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) that are listed within the Strategic Plan, resonates with you and with diversity? State why?

The values I learned from my heritage directly aligns with the TDOT values of Consistency, Collaboration, and Family. To this day, I use those teachings and apply them to my work ethic to ensure that my work is of the utmost quality.

#### Why is it important to recognize Hispanic Heritage Month, especially in 2021?

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage month is incredibly important especially in 2021 because it is crucial to recognize the path paved by Hispanics. The way that Hispanic culture infiltrates all aspects of life, even the American lifestyle, is important to know and understand. In order to have unity within a community, we must understand each other; Hispanic Heritage month is only a reminder of the work that Hispanics and non-Hispanics have ahead of them in order to become a unified collective.